

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Joining the European Union (EU) in 1995, Sweden has become one of its member states with the highest Euroscepticism until now. For 25 years joining the union, Sweden has been showing many behaviours that reflect Euroscepticism from its citizens and government. From Swexit referendum discourse, refusing the single currency of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), withdrawal from Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM2), the growing anti-immigration sentiments, the rise of popularity of right-wing parties which oppose its membership on the union, to several rejections of EU policies.

One of the oldest attitude Sweden imposed that reflects Euroscepticism is staying out from the single currency of EMU. From its first accession days to the Union, Sweden has made it clear that it would be in the Swedes' hands to decide to whether they would join the currency union or not. Eight years later, a referendum was held on 14 September 2003, where Swedish citizens voted yes or no to the statement whether they consider Sweden should introduce the Euro as its currency or not. The result of this referendum was 42% voted yes to the euro while 55,9% voted no to the euro. Most of those voted 'no' were initially has been already sceptical towards the Union. Those voted 'no' also saw the difficulties Sweden would have to face if they changed their currency to the euro. And some of them were doing so weighing the democracy, economic, and social welfare aspect (Pettersson, 2004).

The next example of Euroscepticism attitude in Sweden is linking three Euroscepticism indicators mentioned in the first paragraph. They are the growing anti-immigrant sentiments, the rise of popularity of right-wing parties, and Swexit

referendum discourse. The major cause of this is the refugee crisis happened in 2015 where Sweden received as much as 163,000 asylum seekers, one of the reasons caused this was the free movement of the EU. After this incident, Sweden saw an increasing number of crimes and violence in its cities with notable numbers of the accused are immigrants. Since then, Sweden also experienced increased social segregation where immigrants could not and did not want to blend in with the locals. This resulted in an anti-immigrant sentiment across the country and thus supporting the already awakened the right-wing parties' existence in Swedish political life. In 2018 Swedish general election, the Sweden Democrats successfully secured 62 seats in the Parliament, making it the third party with largest seats share in the Parliament. In the past few years too, Swedish political life has been experiencing an increased support to 'protect' their migration policy. The leader of Liberal Party indirectly said that she does not want to "let the whole world in to Sweden" in her accusation to Centre Party leader, Annie Lööf.

The rising popularity of right-wing parties, Sweden Democrats, has ultimately earned them seats in the European Parliament. And with the fact that Sweden's traditional ally, UK, has scrapped their membership in the Union, Sweden left with no close ally better than UK in the Union. Using this fact, the Sweden Democrats MEPs in the European Parliament threatened the European Commission that it will also make a referendum on Sweden's membership in the EU if they do things catering their interests only.

Previous studies about Euroscepticism in Sweden can be categorized into four focuses. First, few studies focused on the historical aspect and its development throughout the years. Study of Wikman (2015) talks about the history of Euroscepticism in Sweden and Finland, and how it developed from a leftist to populist type of Euroscepticism in both countries. The second popular focus is an integration with immigrants as highlighted in Solano's study. There, Solano tells us about the obstacles in implementing integration policies and how certain groups take roles in

integration problems between locals and immigrants linked to Euroscepticism in Sweden (Solano, 2018). The third focus which has been discussed a lot in research about Sweden's Euroscepticism is how the populist parties affect the rise of populism and Euroscepticism in Sweden citizens. Strömbäck et al (2016) argued that Sweden's scepticism has risen along with the rise of popularity of populist parties in Sweden which was caused by mass media play and coverage. The fourth focus that has been used regularly in this topic of research is the similarity Scandinavian countries have in their scepticism to the EU and how Euroscepticism in the EU Nordic member states is softening but persistent. Nielsen's study (2017) highlighted how the Scandinavians' scepticism towards the union is pragmatic. This study also focused on the differences each countries' citizens have which tend to have negative perceptions on European integration from political, currency, and continent side yet tend to have positive perceptions to the European countries' cooperation, EU cooperation as a whole compared to the other EU member states. Meanwhile, Raunio's study (2007) focused on the EU Nordic member states' scepticism (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden) that caused by the opposition its parties have to the EU, which even though has softened but has remained persistent.

This research is also going to study the topic of Euroscepticism in Sweden, but is offering a new focus to look at. It will focus on discussing Swedish culture of democracy and politics to be the main factors that played role behind Sweden's seemingly sceptical behaviour towards the Union for the past years. This research aims to complete previous studies on Swedish Euroscepticism with a different standpoint, i.e., political and democratic dimension. This research is expected to see Swedish's scepticism as a result of its differences in its political and democratic culture. This research hopes to contribute positively to the International Relations literature regarding Sweden, the European Union and the trend of Euroscepticism.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background, this research will try to answer these questions:

1. To what extent do the culture of democracy and politics of Sweden contest those of the EU?
2. To what extent do these contestations contribute in Sweden's scepticism toward the EU?

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

This research is written to find out how far the differences in the culture of democracy and decision making in the political system between Sweden and the EU influence their relations and Swedish scepticism towards the EU. This research is expected to enhance or contribute positively for the International Relations and European studies focused on the Swedish Euroscepticism. And to give a perspective on understanding the Euroscepticism in European as well as Sweden studies in the academic realm.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

This sub-chapter will discuss the conceptual definition of Euroscepticism and what factors are causing a rise in Euroscepticism.

1.4.1. Euroscepticism

Euroscepticism is a concept which portrays sceptic behaviours against the increasing of the EU powers. It could be manifested from a hesitation towards EU integration, doubting the benefits of deeper European integration, to full resentment towards the EU. The earliest definition and categorization of Euroscepticism were generated by Paul Taggart (2001). Taggart classified Euroscepticism as soft Euroscepticism and hard Euroscepticism. According to

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001;10), “*Hard Euroscepticism implies outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration and opposition to their country joining or remaining members of the EU.*” It could also be said that hard Euroscepticism is a behaviour in which there is an absolute opposition towards any form of the EU and European integration. Hard Euroscepticism can be found in European countries refused to join the union or member states that are eager to dismiss their membership.

Meanwhile, soft Euroscepticism is when “*where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that ‘national interest’ is currently at odds with the EU trajectory*” (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008). A state can have Euroscepticism even though it has been a member of the EU. Soft Euroscepticism as a sceptic behaviour to the EU caused by contradicting national-interest and/or a sceptic behaviour to one or more of the EU policies oftentimes occurred in many of the EU member states.

Meanwhile, a similar yet wider categorization of Euroscepticism was developed by Kopecký and Mudde. Kopecký and Mudde develop four typologies of ‘Euroscepticism’ where three of them are somewhat similar to the categorization made by Taggart and Szczerbiak. Kopecký and Mudde’s Eurosceptic and Europragmatist has a similar characterization with Taggart and Szczerbiak’s soft Euroscepticism and their Euroreject typology has similar traits with Taggart and Szczerbiak’s hard Euroscepticism.

They divided the categorization based on two dimensions of the member states’ perspective on the idea of European integration and the EU. From the member states’ perspective on the idea of European integration, they are divided into Europhiles and Europhobes. Europhiles fully supports European integration underlying the EU as a whole, or only economically, or

politically, or even integration as a federal state. They believe any form of cooperation is great for European countries and they support cooperation and integration between European countries. Whilst Europhobes do not support or often even oppose any form of cooperation underlying the EU and European integration. They do not believe any form of cooperation will do good for European countries. Most of them are states with high nationalism or socialism or an isolationist. And for their perspective on the idea of the EU, they are divided into EU-optimist and EU-pessimist. Those fall in the EU-optimist category either feel optimistic and content for the EU as it is, as it is developing and as their future. Nonetheless, this does not mean they would not criticize the EU's performance. States will also criticize the EU, but they do this as they want the best for the EU and they believe the EU is the right and vital instrument to reach goals. While those fall in the EU-pessimist category have a pessimistic attitude towards the EU as it is at the moment and the direction of its development. It does not necessarily mean they would want to leave the EU, but they do feel that the EU at the moment is not what it is meant to be when it first established. They hope to change the EU as to how it should be (Kopecký & Mudde, 2002).

Regarding the dimensions and category Kopecký and Mudde (2002) established, there are four typologies of states' stance on the EU and European Integration. The first one is what called **Euroenthusiast**. This is a group of country, party, group or individual with a sense of combination of Europhiles and EU-optimist. They fully support the ideas of European integration and believes that the EU is and will be the institutionalization of these ideas. Comparing this to Taggart and Szczerbiak's categorization of Euroscepticism, this group does not have scepticism at all toward the Union. The second one, **Eurosceptic**, is a group of country, party, group or individual with a sense of combination of Europhiles and EU-pessimist. They support general ideas of

European integration, but is pessimistic with the current situation and the EU's development in making these ideas happen. This type is what Taggart and Szczerbiak defined as soft Euroscepticism. The third one, called **Europragmatist**. They are a group of country, party, group or individual with a sense of combination of Europhobes and EU-optimist, who does not support the idea of European integration underlying the EU establishment, but does not necessarily oppose it. They still support the EU. Those who fall in this category usually does not have a strong ideological opinion towards the union and tend to be pragmatic because they feel benefitted with the union existence. This one is also what Taggart and Szczerbiak has defined as soft Euroscepticism. And the last one is a group of country, party, group or individual with a sense of combination of Europhobes and EU-pessimist called **Eurorejects**. They who strongly opposes European integration as well as the EU existence. If compared to Paul Taggart's categorization of Euroscepticism, Kopecký and Mudde's Eurorejects is what Taggarts calls hard Euroscepticism.

Kopecký and Mudde do have a more comprehensive explanation in their understanding of Euroscepticism but their significance has a shallower meaning than Taggart and Szczerbiak's. In short, both studies have their own shortcomings. Therefore, this research will address Sweden's Euroscepticism as a combination of Kopecký and Mudde's Euroscepticism and Europragmatist and Taggart and Szczerbiak's soft Euroscepticism.

Moving on, Euroscepticism is not just about definition. It is also about factors causing why they are happening in the first place. So far, according to Monica Condruz Bacescu (2014), Euroscepticism can be caused by four main factors, which are economic, politics, democracy, and sovereignty. In economic Euroscepticism, states will calculate the costs and benefits it gets from being an EU member state. From the sovereignty aspect, states assume cooperation in domestic policy should not harm states' sovereignty. States would want to

cooperate in some policies' field that could not be done by itself, but also want other policies (usually in the socio-cultural policy) to be done regarding their sovereignty. From the democracy aspect, Eurosceptics see the representative and participation from citizens is still far from democratic. And in the political aspect, Eurosceptic saw the EU practice is based on certain doctrine.

Bacescu's argument is also supported by Catharina Sorensen who writes about the factors causing Euroscepticism in her study (2017). In line with Bacescu's statement, Sorensen also saw democratic, economic and sovereignty as the main causes of Euroscepticism in member states. However, Bacescu and Sorensen addressed one thing differently as 'politic' and 'social' causal of Euroscepticism respectively. Yet, both has the same meaning in which Bacescu described it as how the EU is run based on certain political doctrine while Sorensen described it as how the member states have differences in policy direction with the EU. So, basically, both has been meaning to say that Euroscepticism can also be caused by differences in political perspective. Sorensen (2017) described them based on previous studies about Euroscepticism as following.

Economic Euroscepticism is when member states or citizens of the EU or groups develop a scepticism attitude based on their perception of the economic benefit derived from cooperation. Usually, those with economic Euroscepticism sees joining the EU or cooperating with the EU do not benefitting their country's economy at all. Sometimes, they even see it hurts their economy instead. Sovereignty-based Euroscepticism is where whether cooperation is experienced as a challenge to their country's way of life. There may be concerns about national identity or the objection to EU interference in a specific area. To put it lightly, they basically see that joining the EU and handling them some area of policy will take away their sovereignty. Democratic Euroscepticism is the perception of inadequate structures in the EU's "setup"

and institutions, which are seen as too remote or transparent. This category sees the EU suffering from democracy deficit. They are too reserved and complex, and they do not involve enough actors to be seen as democratic. Social Euroscepticism on the other hand is where Euroscepticism derived from a more political or value-oriented issue. Here, the EU is evaluated according to the same characteristics of national politics. This Euroscepticism type views the EU as a “rich club” and there is too little emphasis on social policies as minority rights and welfare benefits. It can be said that this category of Euroscepticism is being triggered over differences in policy direction.

This research will ultimately use the two research of Euroscepticism factors above in analysing the cause of Swedish Euroscepticism.

1.5. Hypothesis

This research hypothesizes that the differences in the culture of democracy and politics between Sweden and the EU has been the main reasons why Sweden has become one of the EU member-states with the highest indicators of Euroscepticism.

1.6. Research Methodology

1.6.1. Research Method

This research will be done using a qualitative method. This chosen research method according to Moleong (2000) is to explain the causality of a phenomenon descriptively for a deeper understanding of it. This research will be using a conceptual framework as its theoretical base to analyse the data obtained.

1.6.2. Research Scope

To prevent the discussion from overstudying the relevance dimensions of the topic, this research will apply limitation as to which duration the work will be focusing on. In this regard, this research will highlight Euroscepticism that has happened in Sweden since it joined the union from 1995 to 2019.

1.6.3. Data Collection

This research will collect data through literature study from previous literature and books related to the topic. It will primarily collect data through online research portals regarding this issue, from international media, the EU and Sweden's official website, and international academic journals.

1.6.4. Analytical Method

This research will be analysed using a congruence method where it will be explanative and will try to explain the answer to the research question by comparing the theory used and data obtained. This method's purpose to trace the causal (independent variable) of an effect (dependent variable). With Swedish Euroscepticism toward the EU as the dependent variable, and the culture of democracy and politics as the independent variable.

1.7. Research Contents

CHAPTER I as a research design will examine the research background, research questions, conceptual framework, hypothesis, research methodology, and research disposition.

CHAPTER II will deeply elaborate on the culture of democracy and politics in decision-making process differences between Sweden and the EU and how they inflict Euroscepticism in Sweden.

CHAPTER III will try to answer the research question by using the information available from the second chapter and analysing them under the conceptual framework over in the first chapter.

CHAPTER IV will be the closing chapter which will contain the conclusion of this research.